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ON SCARLET FEVER.

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[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

SCARLET FEVER has many congeries; and if, as our most eminent authors decide, its different titles all point to the same disease, a reference to some of its different names may serve to shed light upon its real or supposed character. Thus we have *scarlatina anginosa, purple fever, angina maligna, angina ulcerosa, cynanche maligna, putrid quinsy, canker rattles, canker rash, putrid sore throat, rosalia,* and some others.

Dr. Miner observes, that "It is usually easy to see *generic* resemblances; but it often requires the most exact discrimination to detect *specific* differences."

Scarlatina occurs with vomiting, a very quick pulse, high fever, extremely hot skin, delirium, thirst, sore throat, scarlet efflorescence, and swelled tonsils. There is not always, with us, a four days' illness preceding the eruption, as foreign writers teach; for in less than *three* days children sometimes die, having had them all, and this without the least previous indisposition. It occurs (that is, the fever) without the usual efflorescence, in scarlet, crimson, or rose-blush patches. There are, in other cases, neither points nor patches, but only a general uniform redness, which is most apparent on the face. It then resembles a deep-red, or crimson blush, only it is not evanescent.

The fever may occur, as often happens, without any noticeable, or at least remarkable, change on the surface; and with a throat, mouth, tongue, or ear affection only, one or all—the tongue being sometimes so swollen that infants cannot draw the mother's breast. The coat thereon is white, yellow or brown. The efflorescence, in other cases, takes place with very little, if any, soreness of the throat or mouth, or swelling internal or external, except a general and uniform bloating of the whole body. In this form we may look for the eyes to be watery, bloodshot, and impatient of light. Such affections of the eyes may, however, occur in all the forms of the malady. But this is the form that usually has the greatest desquamation of the cuticle during recovery. Perhaps, on the whole, the disease appears more frequently in *red patches* than in *red points*. In *red points* we have the hottest skin, but in *red patches* we may expect more of canker.*

* Canker.—We choose to retain this term—by which is meant eroding and extremely tedious ulcers, without any tumor—often tending rapidly to sphacelus—always looking [illegible]

The fauces are usually redder than natural, but not uniformly so, for in some cases they are paler than in health. When pale there is a bloated appearance of the parts, denoting an erysipelatous inflammation rather than that of phlogosis—a state threatening mortification rather than suppuration. External swelling of the glands of the neck, ending in suppuration, is, however, not unfrequent. A physician in a distant town, with whom I was lately in consultation, gave me the history of a case in which suppuration, canker, or sphacelus, or all united, had so destroyed the parts, that a hole was formed quite through his little patient's neck, so that food and drinks came out at the orifice. From the cavity of the ear matter sometimes passes by way of the Eustachian tube into the fauces, and thence into the stomach, causing sickness, vomiting, and loss of appetite. Such a case fell under my notice lately. In such cases there is also a discharge from the ear externally.

This disease evinces its relation to croup, quinsy, and other throat affections, by the excessive torpor of the stomach, which is sometimes so great that the very largest doses of emetics fail to produce vomiting. When croup follows scarlet fever, it is in some parts of the country called *canker rattles*—rattles being the popular name for croup. In bad cases a claret or mahogany color of the abdominal and hypogastric regions will be found to exist, when not to be elsewhere seen. As this portentous hue is thus sometimes local, it can only be ascertained by inspection. The penis of boys is purple and swollen in such instances. In one respect scarlet fever, when pure and uncomplicated, shows a dissimilarity to croup and other complaints of the respiratory organs, by the freedom and easiness of breathing, which is sometimes unaffected even in the whole stages of the very worst cases.

One phenomenon of dangerous disease, is a brain affection, denoted by stupor, and a constant disposition to sleep; although the patient is easily aroused, he directly gets to sleep again, and continues to sleep quietly, and to breathe easily, sometimes to the last. This is directly different from croup, and is the more striking because croup sometimes succeeds canker rash.

The stools, when the disease is malignant, are black, and sometimes more intensely so than in any other disease whatever. I have known black vomiting in one or two cases only. Clots of blood are found in the dejections, in cases of internal hemorrhage—so black, indeed, as not to be known without breaking them. It is a popular opinion, and not entirely unfounded, that calomel colors the stools black. But I have known them black before that or any other medicine had been given—of which I had a proof lately in a child.

Pain in one or both of the ears is not uncommon. Nor is it unusual for one or both of them to suppurate, and to discharge after recovery, and to prove a great annoyance, as well as to be difficult to heal. Deafness is from hence to be feared.

Blood sometimes issues from the nose, mouth and bowels, but is not always fatal. It occurs only in protracted cases. In one case of three

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or black, but often ash colored. They are seated in the mouth or throat, or both, at first, and afterwards erode other parts, external and internal.

weeks' continuance, and when professional visits were discontinued, and the patient apparently out of danger, this kind of hemorrhage occurred. We saw the blood, of a scarlet color, trickling down the upper lip from both nostrils at once. It was thin, and like bloody water as to consistence. Its intense scarlet hue showed it to be of arterial origin; and the patient's pulse, which had been, in the acute stage of the disease, scarcely to be felt, was now full and active. This patient was a boy eleven years of age. His nose had leaked, and coagula formed in his nostrils, for several days preceding. The day before, the skin over the left nostril was swollen and of a *blue-black* color. It regained, however, its natural hue, the swelling went off, and the bleeding was checked.

A bloated state of the abdominal and hypogastric regions, without discoloration, with an inappetency to urine, or temporary ischuria, are symptoms which we have sometimes to combat.

Prognostics.—The brain affection, the tendency to mortification, the dissolution of the crasis of the blood, and the extensive disorganization in and about the mouth and throat by canker, form the sombre shades of the malady. Either of these may end fatally, or the whole in combination. The fever itself, although hotter than any other, does not of itself produce death. It always abates before that event, if it is to take place. And if the disease proves fatal in its acute stage, as on the third day, it is by mortification. We have known one instance of this, in which the abdominal region became, after dissolution, as spotted as a leopard.

From the high authority of Dr. Dewees we learn that the patient, in all forms of the disease, is out of danger on the *ninth* day. But this is by no means uniformly the case. Canker continues to erode, to destroy digestion, and to impair the appetite, for a number of weeks, in some cases, after the other symptoms abate—inducing marasmus and hectic from the absorption of purulent matter; and we have known a dangerous hemorrhage to commence at the end of five or six weeks. This period, therefore, can only relate to the acute stage. Picking the bed-clothes, and a low muttering delirium, are not signs of such great and immediate danger as in other fevers. Extreme irritability, peevishness, termed by nurses *crossness*, and from which they infer recovery, will not be found to apply thus favorably in canker rash. It is a part of the disease, as a delusive hope of recovery is of consumption.

When the brain affection is not complicated with hydrocephalus, the patient may die with no apparent suffering, with easy respiration, without tossing or distortion, and as though in a sweet sleep. A medical gentleman, who stands high in his profession, informed me that out of *two hundred cases* he had lost *twelve*, and that all his fatal cases were with an affection of the brain. A mahogany color of the whole surface, or of the abdomen only, indicates imminent danger.

Relapses are more frequent, as well as more dangerous, in this than in any other disease. Sudden death sometimes occurs after the sick have so far recovered as to walk about, and even to go out. Such instances, however, are not very common, and mostly happen in adults, who are far less liable to the disease than children. Apoplexy may be

the cause. The acrimony of the fluids renders the bloodvessels very tender, so that extravasation may easily take place on the brain, and thus produce it. This consideration should render convalescents cautious of much exercise, until health is restored. We heard of a man who died in his garden. Attacks, sometimes apparently very serious, with a pulse of 120 in a minute, may end favorably and speedily in health. Such is the various and eccentric nature of the disease; so that much caution is requisite in promulgating a prognosis either of a severe disease, of danger, or of recovery. This exercise of caution should be *particular* as well as *general*—thus, although puking is a common symptom at the onset, yet it is absent in mild and in unusually severe attacks. As it is the mark of an attempt of the stomach—the centre of the system—to throw off the prostrating causes of the disease, in mild cases the vital energies are not sufficiently aroused to produce it, whilst in cases of the utmost severity they are sunk below reaction. As the abdominal muscles contribute almost entirely to the action of vomiting, these we have known, seemingly, struck with sphacelus at the first seizure. Hence the absence of the common symptom of vomiting in such malignant cases. In proof of these views, the experienced practitioner will recollect that when there is vomiting, there is often nothing apparently offensive in the contents of the stomach, either as to quality or quantity. It is a symptom of systematic, and not of local disorder.

Canker and partial sphacelus are wont to produce extensive sloughing and purulent discharges. Hence hectic; puking, when the discharge is swallowed, and emaciation—all in the protracted stages of illness, and none of which can be certainly foreseen in its early stages. In this connection we may again mention hemorrhage.

The black alvine discharges, as well as claret color, which begins in the living body about the abdomen, as putrefaction does in the dead body, show the putrid tendency of canker rash. And the eye must be fixed on these phenomena in the prognosis and in the treatment.

Dropsy succeeding canker rash is not usually dangerous, unless it be dropsy of the head. When the stools are natural, and properly tinged with bile of normal quantity and color, the ground of a favorable prognosis is well established. When the efflorescence is excessive, so as to completely cover every pin point of the surface, accompanied with general intumescence, the prognosis is unfavorable. Such a case we have seen the present season.

The canker sometimes produces extensive mischief in the cellular substance, which it destroys, leaving the skin and muscles detached from each other. In one case which I saw the present season, the cavity thus formed held a syringe full of injection. A hole was eaten, or sphacelated, quite through the skin, which would admit the end of the finger. This orifice and sloughing were not exactly over the glands, but higher up on the neck, in the region of the left ear; whilst another hole, through or between the muscles, appeared to extend into the internal cavity, and the matter there formed to pass through the Eustachian tube into the mouth, thence into the stomach, and thus to cause frequent turns of puking. The glands of the right side were in a state

of suppuration, and matter occasionally issuing, externally, from both ears. This was the state of the patient, a girl of five years old, when I was called twenty miles to a consultation on her case. Although she was said to have been a healthy, plump child, her emaciation was extreme. She talked much, but from the erosion of the parts, it was extremely difficult to understand a word she said. She had been bled from the arm about five weeks before; but the orifice never had healed, the cellular substance around it was destroyed, leaving the skin and flesh, in the bend of the arm, detached from each other, and purulent matter was issuing from the puncture. Her pulse was quick, she was hectical from absorption, and a portentous flush visited her cheeks.

Scarlatina does not uniformly follow the laws of other epidemics, which are most severe in the first cases. It, on the contrary, sometimes appears to increase in malignity as it progresses.

One sequel of the disorder is a stiffness of the muscles about the joints. A boy, after the subsidence of the acute stage, could not walk, from a stiffness of his knees, nor look at the sun, from a stiffness of his neck. In this case, the matter which in others discharges itself by suppuration, fell on the joints, causing immobility. He was in this state when I first saw him, another of the profession having previously attended. A course of iodine restored the use of his lower limbs, aided by blisters and diuretics, speedily. But it was long before his neck was cured. The cure, however, in the end, was complete. Iodine was used externally in ointment, and internally in tincture.

It is probable that black feces and brain affections are more common in some seasons and localities than in others, they not having been particularly noticed by writers in general, nor formerly frequently seen by myself. But in my late practice I have been particularly impressed with these morbid phenomena. It is not very common for black feces to pass off spontaneously. I was once called to a gentleman, who sent for me for this cause alone. But he had no indisposition. A case of black diarrhœa, in a child, happened the present season, and appeared to cure the approaching canker rash in its incipient stage. Blisters sometimes put on very alarming appearances, being visited by canker, turning black, and threatening mortification. I have noticed in them, also, that phenomenon which we sometimes observe in very bad cases of anthrax, the pores appearing as though they were stuffed with *suet*. It denotes a very unfavorable state of the solids.

Canker rash is one of the most stationary, as well as the most eccentric, of all epidemics. It is said to have prevailed in New York for 20 years, viz., from 1780 to 1800. It is now nine years since I saw it in Brooklyn. It was then, also, prevalent in New York; and in both these cities has been, I believe, uninterruptedly present ever since.

Fever seems to be that part of the disease, which it, in none of its forms, can exist without. Its intensity varies with the degree of affection of the skin, the mouth, the tonsils, the glands of the neck, and the alimentary canal. Its seat appears more particularly to be in and about the ganglionic nerves, which concentrate in the precordia and epigastrium. Here is its primary location. Hence nausea and vomiting.

The intimate connection existing betwixt the alvine canal and the skin is next shown by eruption. This connection is further evinced by the decline of the canker, the diminution of the swelled tonsils, glands of the neck, and efflorescence, with the fever. But a sudden retrocession of the eruption may increase the fever, and requires remedies to reproduce it, or the patient may be lost. It denotes an alarming state of general debility —a loss of energy in the solids, as also a dissolution of the crasis of the blood. A gentleman, formerly a near neighbor, informed me that the disease was once in his family. A little daughter had it, with a swelling of considerable size on one side of her neck. She was attended by a physician who never had much reputation. He lanced this swelling, as the father supposed, prematurely; it bled, and the hemorrhage never could be stopped. The child bled to death. I was lately informed of a case in which the patient was bled from the arm. The orifice showed no disposition to heal, but formed a sinous suppurating ulcer, running along the hollow of the vein. Although bleeding and blisters cannot be entirely dispensed with in all cases, we have facts enough now before us to teach us apprehension and caution in their use.

Eruptive fevers, according to John Hunter, prove the medical attempts of nature to rid itself of morbid matters, as does sweating. It is a popular opinion that there is a concealed rash when the sick do not break out. This idea, if erroneous, is generally void of harm. Saffron tea is used by families to throw out the eruption, which does no hurt; it does not interfere with more appropriate remedies. A secondary eruption, sparse, and resembling chickenpox, only that the pock is larger, sometimes occurs, as does a slight secondary fever. These do not appear until the specific disease has ceased, or is fast declining. I think that I have noticed chilly fits more frequently in the course of the disease, than at its first commencement, at which time they are seldom mentioned.

(To be continued.)

SARATOGA WATERS.—NO. III.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Dear Sir,—In my last communication I attempted to show that the saline springs of this place are not only aperient, diuretic and deobstruent, but *tonic*. From an extended and careful examination of the treatment adopted at the various watering places in Europe and our country, I have not met with one spring, except such as are simply sulphureous, that does not prove injurious to invalids laboring under inflammation or plethora. As this is a point of great consequence to those gentlemen who are sending their "forlorn cases" to these fountains, allow me to be somewhat more explicit on this topic.

Before my settling here, I had been many years prescribing Congress water in bottles to my patients, as a pleasant aperient, deobstruent and diuretic. Its bracing effects I never suspected. In conversation with a professional brother in Hartford, just before leaving, who has a wide and respectable practice, and who is daily prescribing Congress water, he

seemed almost to have forgotten whether there was any iron in the article or not. And there can be no doubt there are many physicians in our country who are in the practice of directing this excellent and efficient remedy without remembering, and perhaps without having seen, its analysis, or suspecting its bracing qualities. But, were these gentlemen posted here and obliged to watch the daily effects of this beverage, when taken liberally from the fountains, on the pulse, color, tone, and movements of the system; and to witness the unequivocal aggravation of local, inflammatory affections when not counteracted by appropriate remedies, they would appreciate the anxiety felt by the writer of these remarks that the profession, generally, should understand the exact state of the case, and give their patients the proper directions and preparation when leaving their homes for Saratoga Springs.

Do not understand me to say that all need depletion before they come, or while here. Far from it. There are very many who come with soft, slow pulse, pale countenance, and freedom from inflammatory tendencies, whom the saline springs exactly suit without any previous or accompanying medication. Crowds of such come and go annually, rejoicing in their visit to these fountains. There are others, too, of so cold and torpid a habit that they need warming and acrid remedies as auxiliaries to the water; and there are some with such exquisitely irritable nerves as to require—not depletory measures—but anodynes, such as a pill every 4 hours of extract of hyosciamus, carbonate of ammonia and camphor. I have been pleased to see how visitants of this character, whose bowels had been thrown into great pain and distension by a few tumblers taken in the morning, could be made to bear full and effectual doses of the water by the addition of such a sedative as the one above mentioned. Such patients, when accommodated with the proper, qualifying agents, receive the legitimate benefit of the waters like those who need remedies of an opposite character, or who need nothing at all.

But where one needs stimulants and anodynes, many need a depleting course to enable them to reap the full benefit of the remedy obtained here. For, just consider the wide difference between a patient who brings a calm circulation, soft pulse, pale tongue and lips, and exemption from local obstructions, and one who is florid, full, hot, with white fur on the tongue, hard, wirey pulse, and all those symptoms founded on a sanguine temperament and sub-acute or chronic local inflammation. Cases of *apoplexy* were sent here last season, with full, hard pulse, florid complexion and numbness of the limbs, to partake of these invigorating waters. Yet there were some such invalids who reaped the usual benefit from the waters, by being put upon a simultaneous course of depletion. Without this they would have gone home injured; with it, they decidedly convalesced. *Palsy* generally required similar medication. *Chronic disease of the liver* was frequently aggravated by the water, till reducing measures were combined, when recovery proved to be as easy as in other cases. And there were a number of cases of disease in the *respiratory apparatus*, where the waters operated admirably when accompanied with antiphlogistic remedies. I do not entertain a doubt that there are many diseases of the lungs, par-

ticularly such as are sympathetic, that would receive decided benefit from these waters, provided the pulse be kept soft, and the system *below* the healthy standard of action.

An unexpected proportion of *secondary syphilis* and *gonorrhœa* came with entonic symptoms, and could not bear the use of the mineral water till properly prepared. *Local pains and tenderness in the abdomen* often needed the same qualifications by medicine. The same was true of many *female complaints*. But I observed no set of invalids so often injured by their resort to these fountains as the *rheumatic*. This remark may appear strange to the physicians most acquainted with the Saratoga waters, and who have known how many of this class go away in a rapid progress to health. But it is nevertheless true that no small number of this numerous class, by drinking and bathing, without proper reduction, do retire positively injured. And there is no enigma in the case. One rheumatic invalid has long been afflicted till all inflammatory tendencies are worn out. His joints are stiff, and he feels the regular augmentation of his troubles from a cold, north-east storm. But he is thin, pale, feeble, and his pulse is uniformly soft and slow. Indeed, before coming here he has been proved to bear stimulants without any disturbance of the arterial system. Such cases, whether chronic rheumatism, sciatica, or lumbago, will find most decided relief from drinking and bathing. But if the disease be recent, accompanied with heat, swelling and pain of joints, aggravated by warm applications and motion, a white tongue and hard pulse, the most direct and positive injury must result from the potations and hot bathing, unless the system be brought *below* the grade of inordinate action. This is not true of Congress water only, but applies to compound tincture of guaiac. and all stimulating, anti-rheumatic remedies. Did the patience of your readers permit, I could insert many authorities on hand from watering places and bathing establishments to confirm the accuracy of my own observations.

But I must close. I have said enough to awaken the attention of my medical brethren; and I beg they will have the goodness to furnish their patients who resort hither, not only with the proper directions, but the proper preparation. It is a matter of plain common sense that there is no *efficient* medicine that is not liable to do hurt as well as good. May I not hope, then, that a more considerate attention to the *true nature* of these natural remedies, on the part of the faculty, may be instrumental in more widely diffusing relief from pain and suffering, and enhancing the beneficial agency of these valuable fountains?

Respectfully, yours,

Saratoga Springs, April 14, 1839. M. L. North.

[The 4th and last No. next week.]

THEA VIRIDIS IN BURNS AND SCALDS.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Dear Sir,—Thinking that, perhaps, not all of your numerous readers are acquainted with the efficacy of green tea in the cure of burns and

scalds, I present you with this short paper on the subject, and you are at liberty to lay it on or under the table, at your pleasure—although I should like to have the remedy generally known, if it is not already.

It is about three years since I first applied this article in these cases; but in this short time I have had repeated opportunities of testing its virtues. The first case in which I employed it was that of a child, three years old, whose clothes were literally burnt off from it. It was cured by this article alone, and notwithstanding large portions of not only integument but muscle also, sloughed out, the cavities were soon filled with healthy granulations, and the cicatrices formed a smooth surface. Since that time I have treated other cases, of more or less severity, in the same manner, and with similar success. Treated in this way the inflammation soon subsides, and the healing process is astonishingly rapid. It is always necessary to keep the bowels sufficiently open with some cooling laxative, as crem. tart., or sulph. magnes.

Any of the green teas may be used. It is to be moistened with warm water to render it soft, and applied in the form of a cataplasm. Perhaps it may be more conveniently employed by forming it into a cataplasm with Indian meal. When the burn or scald is in a situation that renders this form impracticable, the injured parts may be kept constantly moistened with a very strong infusion. I should suppose the extract would be an elegant form in which it might be employed.

Respectfully, yours,

Unionville, Mass., April 16, 1839. E. G. Wheeler.

NEW METHOD OF FILLING DECAYED TEETH.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Sir,—If the following account should be deemed likely to afford a hint to any of your readers, professional or non-professional, you are at liberty to insert it in your Journal.

I am acquainted with a lady, about the age of 35, whose decayed teeth are *filled with pine*; and it answers a very good purpose. The following is her story, as I had it from her own lips—and she is a person of the most undoubted veracity.

About four years ago, having heard of the process of filling teeth with gold, and the objects it was intended to accomplish, and having several which were rapidly wasting away, the thought struck her that she would try a process which was less expensive. Her first step was to ascertain the exact shape and size of some of the decayed places in her teeth; which she did by filling them first with soft bread or dough, and then carefully removing it. When this had been done, she cut out small pieces of pine wood of the same size and shape with the dough, and pressed them into the cavities. By imbibing moisture, the pieces of wood, of course, became enlarged, and remained in their place, and the decay ceased.

I examined her teeth about a month since, and found the pine as firmly fixed in their cavities as if it had been inserted but the day be-

fore, and answering every purpose, for the time, so far as I know, of pure gold. Indeed, I have had several teeth filled, in the usual manner, by dentists who sustained a very high reputation; but I never have had a particle of the *filling* in my mouth after the lapse of four years, or even of three.

Dentists have long made use of wood, I believe, in *inserting* teeth, but the lady whom I have mentioned was wholly ignorant of the fact. The experiment was her own, purely; suggested by that necessity which has so often and so appropriately been styled the "mother of invention." Indeed, I am not aware that wooden plugs have ever been used, even by dentists, in the work of *filling* teeth. Yours, &c.

Boston, April 9, 1839. W. A. A.

ORTHOPEDIC INSTITUTION.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Sir,—I wish to improve a small portion of your Journal, to invite the attention of the profession to the valuable institution above named, under the care of Dr. Brown, in our city, by the publication of a letter recently received from the father of one of those unfortunates, the objects of his sympathy and skill. I have had the pleasure of witnessing several cases of spinal distortion, hitherto regarded as hopeless, materially benefited at this institution, and the appalling deformity of club feet completely removed by a simple yet skilful operation, to which I feel bound to allude. Still, however, I will merely ask you to give publicity to the following brief communication, which I think will not only fix the attention of the profession upon the high claims of the conductor of this recent institution, but may be blessed to many sufferers who have yielded themselves to a hopeless abandonment of recovery.

Boston, April 8, 1839. Respectfully, &c.

E. W. Leach.

Conway, N. H., April 4, 1839.

Dear Sir,—You will recollect that I called on you a few weeks since, with my daughter, who was suffering under a complaint of the spine. You recommended me to the orthopedic institution of your city. I called on Dr. Jackson, who advised me to Dr. Brown, as the only prospect of relieving my daughter's sufferings. Not having an opportunity to see you, as I should have desired, I feel bound to address you to express my gratitude for your recommending me to this institution—and also to acquaint you with my entire satisfaction with the manner in which it is conducted. After a careful examination of the case of my daughter, Dr. B. advised me to remain a short time in Boston with her, which I did. We passed three weeks only in the city, and she is now three inches taller than when I placed her under his care. The day before we left Boston, she walked to the Navy Yard in Charlestown, and returned, with but comparatively little fatigue. I know not in what terms to express my gratitude for the benefit which has already been conferred, in a case which we considered hopeless, and for nine years

has been growing worse and worse—and this in the brief period of three weeks. Had I time I should like to speak of the different cases of spinal affections which I saw treated; but I ask you to examine for yourself and for the afflicted who may apply to you for counsel. This institution is doing much good, and I feel that no individual testimony in its favor should be withheld. Grateful for the interest you manifested in my daughter's welfare, and that your advice has been blessed to her great relief, I am your obedient servant,

To E. W. Leach, M.D. B. H.

PHYSIOLOGICAL PHENOMENON.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Sir,—I read in the present volume of your Journal, No. 6, the very interesting account of the "snake man" (R. H. Copeland), whose deformities and physical peculiarities are said to be "owing to a fright his mother received from a rattle snake attempting to bite her about the sixth month of pregnancy." Now if the account alluded to be true (and I confess I am credulous enough to believe it may be), it seems to prove the possibility, at least, that the imagination of the mother may exert an influence upon her fœtus in utero.

My first introduction to this subject, was with the anatomical and physiological reasoning of Dr. Dewees, which cried "delusion," and at the cheap rate of one half hour's reading, I felt myself amply qualified to echo "delusion." I accepted his theory, accompanied by such force and pathos of reasoning, with acclamation; "I should have been ashamed to do otherwise."

Now I am at a loss to make the facts of the case alluded to (if they be true), and of the one I am about to relate, which I know to be true, harmonize with what I had thought to be a "delusion."

Mrs. B., then of this town, now living in the adjoining town of T., while pregnant (I do not know at what month), received intelligence of the death of her brother, who died in the town of N. D. (15 or 20 miles distant), who was instantly killed in a mill, by the falling of a stick of timber, which struck him upon the back part of the head and shoulders, crushing in the whole posterior part of the head. Thus the messenger described the bloody wound to Mrs. B. who, I am informed, did not subsequently see her deceased brother.

When confined, Mrs. B. was attended by the late and much lamented Dr L., a highly respectable practitioner of this place, who delivered her of a stillborn child nearly or quite of ordinary size, features and limbs well developed, body straight and well formed; but it had one deformity —the occiput seemed crushed in, and to present a flat surface, as far as the vertex above, and laterally nearly as far as the ears. The head is drawn back, and rests down upon the shoulders; the whole back part of the head, and integuments of the spine, down to near the union of the last lumbar vertebra and sacrum, presents the appearance of one continuous clot of blood, gradually diminishing in thickness and

width from above, to its termination, which is abrupt, and succeeded, apparently, by perfectly healthy and natural skin. Finally, the impression received and inference drawn by any one who sees the fœtus, would be, that it had received a very severe blow upon the back of the head, sufficient to crush in the whole occiput, and injure the integuments of the spine; and as the blood issued from the head, and ran down the back, it coagulated in its course.

The above brief description (which has been elicited at this time, by the account of the "snake man"), is the appearance of the fœtus through the glass which contains it. But I propose, at some future period, to ascertain and report the true anatomical appearance of the head and back, and likewise every possible particular of interest, from the mother of the fœtus; believing it to be a rare specimen of curiosity for the physiologist.

J. F. Hall.

Wolfborough, N. H., April 15, 1839.

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL

BOSTON, MAY 1, 1839.

LEAD FOR FILLING TEETH.

A correspondent in this day's Journal cites the value of wood, as a substitute for gold, in plugging carious teeth. However successful the experiment may have been in a single case, we apprehend that a serious objection would arise against an extensive and indiscriminate use of wood, on account of its imbibing the saliva, and ultimately becoming exceedingly offensive. We have been assured that lead is fully equal to gold, for filling diseased teeth, and by some thought even superior, on account of its perfect inelasticity. A lady, the wife of a physician about twenty miles from this city, had one or two teeth filled with lead, some eighteen years ago, which completely restored these organs to usefulness, and has preserved them to this time. Every pressure of an opposing tooth gives the filling more compactness, and the general effect of years is to drive the lead, if placed on the top of the tooth, into every part of the cavity. No bad effects on the health are said to be produced by it: indeed, the quantity is so small, that the billionth part of a grain could never be in solution at once. Lastly, economical considerations should and will have some considerable influence on those who are so unfortunate as to require this slight, though important operation. One of the principal apologies of the dentist for the expense of filling teeth, is the cost of the gold. Now if lead can be safely and savingly substituted, it will enable many to avail themselves of the advantages of the dental art, who are now too proud to acknowledge that they are kept from the manipulations of the dentist, solely on account of the apparent extravagance of his charges.

Singular Loss of Muscular Power.—A man has been walking the streets of Boston, lately, from the eastward, who has suffered such a perfect loss of contractile power in the posterior muscles of the neck, that he is wholly unable to hold up his head. Such is the sensation of weight,

and so inconvenient is it to have it dangling, as it were, on the breast, wholly interfering with the use of the eyes or mouth, that a somewhat complicated machine has been invented expressly to remedy the case. An iron rod runs down the line of the spine, supported by straps from the hips upwards, encircling the body. Upon the top of the rod a broad band embraces the forehead, and thus the organs of vision are kept on a horizontal line—and thus the poor fellow threads his way over the city, hooped up almost like a cask.—How admirable, simple and symmetrical is the apparatus nature employs—snugly packed away on the back of the neck, which maintains the head in an upright condition far more perfectly than the clumsy contrivances of man, when his ingenuity has been taxed to its utmost.

New Medical Hall.—By the munificent appropriation of the City of Lexington, Ky., alluded to the other day, a splendid medical hall is to be forthwith erected for the exclusive use of the medical school. Also, without delay, an infirmary is to be raised, in which the clinical lectures will be delivered in future, and the operations of surgery performed, in presence of the class.

On the 11th of March the University of Transylvania conferred the degree of Doctor of Medicine on fifty-one graduates. Dr. J. Weisiger, of Danville, Ky.; Dr. Erasmus D. Pickett, of Maysville, Ky.; and Dr. Wm. R. Letcher, of Richmond, Virg., had conferred upon them the honorary degree of Doctor in Medicine.

Calomel and Rhubarb.—A correspondent in Connecticut wishes some one to solve the problem—"Why calomel and rhubarb, on being mixed, in a few weeks form a vermilion-colored compound." If such is the fact, it would be gratifying to ascertain whether the medicinal character of the two articles is entirely changed, so that the effect on the system would be different from what it would had the compound been given immediately after being mixed. Attention to this is respectfully solicited by those who are constantly dispensing their own medicines at the bed-side of the patient.

New Medical Appointment.—Applications will be received by the Mayor and Aldermen of Boston, till the 1st of June, from medical gentlemen desirous of obtaining the appointment of physician to the city's institutions at South Boston. The salary is fixed at $1200, together with house-rent and board—which makes it one of the most desirable medical-office situations in New England.

Dr. Miner's Address.—To our great gratification, a second edition of the excellent address of Dr. Miner has been published. It evidences a healthful condition of the public taste, when sound common sense finds a ready market.

Medical Society of Hartford.—The Hartford County Medical Meeting was held in the City of Hartford, Conn., on Thursday, the 11th day of April, 1839.

Dr. William S. Pierson, of Windsor, was chosen chairman, and Dr. G. O. Sumner, of Hartford, clerk, for the ensuing year.

Dr. Holt, of S. Glastenbury, one of the dissertators for the occasion, read a dissertation upon tetanus. Remarks on the disease, comprising its pathology and treatment, were made by several gentlemen present.

Medical facts and observations were solicited of the members present.

Messrs. J. D. Wilcox, of Granby, and S. B. Beresford, of Hartford, were appointed to read dissertations at the next annual meeting.

The following gentlemen were chosen fellows to represent this County, in the State Medical Convention to be held in Hartford in May next, viz., Horatio Gridley, M.D., Amariah Brigham, M.D., Chauncey Brown, M.D., Augustus R. Case, M.D., Pardon Brownell, M.D.

The following resolution was then passed:

Resolved, That it be recommended to the members of this county meeting to carry into effect the 5th resolution of the convention of 1838, and to make their returns for this year to the fellows of this county, previous to the meeting of the convention in May next.

Poisons.—Sir,—A writer in your April No., under the signature of A., quotes from Dr. Peirson that "a man may take poison and not be poisoned," and wishes some one to relieve his mind by proving it. I would simply ask A. if he is a medical man? If he is, whether he supposes arsenic to be poison? If yea, whether he ever prescribed Fowler's solution for the cure of intermittent fever, or for any other disease? And if he ever did, whether he supposes he poisoned his patient? B.

Another correspondent writes—Although A. says, on page 109, that all analogy is against the assertion that minute portions of poison can be taken into the stomach without injury, it appears to me that he has himself, on the same page, furnished a case which, by analogy, may be made to support it. It is well known, A. remarks, that a man may hold poison a short time in his hand, and not be poisoned; and I presume he will not deny that by increasing the strength of that poison, if of a kind that can be sufficiently concentrated, or holding it a longer time, the individual *will* be poisoned by the experiment. Now if the weaker portion is inert, and the stronger injurious, when applied to one part of the system, my ideas of analogy teach me that the same would be the result in any other part—the strength of the article being varied, of course, according to the vitality of the part to which it is applied.

Chinese Physiology.—The Chinese know nothing of the circulation, and therefore the practice of physic is meagre and inadequate to contingencies. They believe that the human body is composed of five elements, viz., water, fire, wood, metal and earth. So long as an equilibrium between these is maintained, people enjoy good health; but as soon as one of them predominates, sickness ensues. All diseases arise from disturbing the equilibrium of these constituent parts, and the art of healing consists in restoring their mutual relations. They know nothing of chemistry, and their medicines are all vegetables—*ginseng* being the sovereign remedy for everything.—The shipment of this root from Boston, formerly, collected on the hills of Vermont and New Hampshire, laid the foundation of some large fortunes in New England.

Preservation of Bodies for Dissection.—M. Gannal has recently published a pamphlet on the embalming of bodies and the preparation of spe-

cimens of natural history and morbid anatomy. As M. Gannal has obtained a patent for his method of embalming, we shall say nothing on this part of his work; he has, however, freely communicated the results of his experiments on preservative fluids for the purposes of dissection, of preparation of animals, &c.

After numerous trials with the salts of alum, and various other substances, M. Gannal has elected the sulphate of alumina as being at once the most efficacious and the cheapest material which can be employed. Two pounds of the sulphate of alumina dissolved in a quart of water, are sufficient to preserve a dead body in a state of freshness for at least three months. If the weather be very hot it will be necessary to employ the fluid in a greater degree of concentration. The solution of alum is simply injected into the vessels of the subject, and the cost of preservation does not exceed ten pence for each body.—*London Lancet.*

Medical Miscellany.—Out of 490 paupers supported last year by the city of Portland, 466 had been, or were, intemperate.—Dr. Collyer has been prevented from lecturing on phrenology in one of the churches at New Orleans, because the members considered that the science tended to materialism.—A copy of the Druggist's General Advertiser has been sent us from New York, wholly devoted to puffing patent medicines and nostrums, with a notice (indicated by the marks of a pen), that if we will copy certain advertisements once a week, for twelve months, and send one number to the agents, we shall be entitled to one dozen of each of the articles!—Thomson, the great originator of the medical humbug, has been mulcted, in this city, for a libel against Dr. Badger.—Dr. Hull's abdominal supporter, highly approved of by Sir Astley Cooper, Sir Benjamin Brodie, Drs. Clark, Blundell, &c., is selling at an encouraging rate in England.—Dr. Evory Kennedy, of the Dublin Lying-in Hospital, delivers four courses of lectures annually, commencing the 2d Monday in February, May, August and November.—Magendie's 21st lecture on the blood and the changes which it undergoes during disease, is one of his happiest efforts.—Tho. H. Burgess, M.D., has written a treatise on the physiology and mechanism of blushing.—Researches in embryology, by Dr. Martin Barry, has been published in England.—Smallpox is again on the increase in England, says the Foreign Journal of Medicine.—There were 35 deaths by consumption, in New York, last week.—A man by the name of Hallenbuke caused the death of a child at Albany, by giving it nearly a pint of brandy at once.—Marriage, physiologically discussed, from the French of M. Dubois, translated by Wm. Greenfield, is abroad—and a miserable catchpenny it is.—A very famous quack has appeared in the neighborhood of London, who calls himself Baron Spolasco—pretending to cure every disease with *two pills and one powder*. A jury of inquest have brought in a verdict of manslaughter against him, for causing the death of Susannah Thomas.—A benevolent medical society was instituted in England, in 1816, for the purpose of affording relief to such of its members, as through mental or bodily infirmity, or other causes, are in distressed circumstances, and require pecuniary assistance. It is a noble charity, and one precisely like it should be established here.—So fully are the people satisfied that coroners should be medical men, that it is presumed all future appointments in England will be of the profession. Why should it not be so here?—Dr. S. Rapolje has been appointed to the Naval Hospital, New York; Dr. W. Johnson, of the U. S. N., to the Navy Yard of the same station.

☞ Those of our subscribers whose bills were enclosed in late Nos. of the Journal, are informed that they will much oblige the publisher by forwarding the amounts due. The rates of exchange are so much improved, that there is no longer any serious difficulty on the score of uncurrent money. Remittances may be made, by mail, to the publisher or to either of the following agents.

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Erratum.—In last week's number, page 171, line 21, for *quality* read *quantity*.

DIED,—In this city, J. A. Brereton, M.D., of the U. S. Army, 52.

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending April 27, 35. Males, 16—females, 19.

Of consumption, 7—scarlet fever, 6—lung fever, 2—old age, 1—decline, 2—abscess, 1—dropsy on the brain, 1—brain fever, 1—burn, 2—marasmus, 1—croup, 3—dropsy in the head, 1—sudden, 1—canker rash, 1—dropsy, 1—disease of the heart, 1—white swelling, 1—stillborn, 3.

OUTLINES OF THE INSTITUTES OF MEDICINE,

FOUNDED on the Philosophy of the Human Economy in Health and in Disease, in 3 Parts. By Joseph A. Gallup, M.D., author of Sketches of Epidemic Diseases in the State of Vermont, late Professor of Theory and Practice in the Vermont Academy of Medicine, and of the Clinical School of Medicine, Ex-president of the Vermont Medical Society, Hon. Member of the Medical Society of the State of New York, &c. 2 vols. 8vo., pp. 876.

"As the writer has been chiefly induced to undertake the labor of the above work, in consequence of two very courteous memorials addressed to him from all the students present of two classes at different medical institutions, requesting a publication of his lectures, or the principles embraced in them, he has presumed, with respectful regards, to present these outlines to the Students of Medicine in the United States, with a hope of their being in some measure useful to the Science of Medicine."

Extract of a Letter from Professor J. W. Francis, M.D.—"Having read the manuscript of Dr. Gallup, on the Institutes of Medicine, I am free to remark, that it is the result of great research, and long and extensive medical experience. The author, while occupied as an observer, has recorded his inferences, with the praiseworthy design of adding to the stock of sound practical information. His book will be read for the originality and excellence of many of his views, and the masculine development of the writer's reflections. It will deserve and find a place in the library of the student, and be often consulted by the medical practitioner with advantage.

"*New York*, 1838."

Just published by OTIS, BROADERS & CO., 129 Washington street, Boston. M 29.

BROWN'S PATENT SELF-INJECTING APPARATUS.

THE undersigned respectfully calls the attention of medical practitioners to a newly-invented instrument, which is for sale at his store, No. 481 Washington street, corner of Elliot street. If physicians would examine the principles of its construction, they would appreciate its usefulness, and would probably be induced to recommend it very generally in their practice. Physicians, druggists, and the inhabitants of Boston, are particularly invited to look into the superiority of this article over the inventor's former instrument, as it now has the advantage of Goodyear's new India Rubber, which is allowed by all to be an entirely different article from that formerly manufactured.

Feb. 6—eoply WILLIAM BROWN.

NEW LEECH ESTABLISHMENT.

THE medical profession are hereby informed that the subscriber has made such arrangements that he will be able to supply them with the best Foreign Leeches, at the lowest market price. They will be safely put up in boxes, with the clay in which they were imported. Physicians may be certain that careful attention will be given to their orders. SETH W. FOWLE,

Oct. 17—1yeop 33 Prince St. corner of Salem St. Boston.

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL is published every Wednesday, by D. CLAPP, JR., at 184 Washington St., corner of Franklin St., to whom all communications must be addressed, post paid. It is also published in Monthly Parts, with a printed cover. There are two volumes each year. J. V. C. SMITH, M.D., Editor. Price $3,00 a year in advance, $3,50 after three months, or $4,00 if not paid within the year. Two copies to the same address, for $5,00 a year, in advance. Orders from a distance must be accompanied by payment in advance or satisfactory references open. Postage the same as for a newspaper.